CMDA Canada is in the middle of a year of strategic planning. We on the board are blessed to have the expert help of CMDA US in this process. We are critically examining where we are and where we feel the Lord is leading us. FOCUS Magazine takes on the themes of Witness, Serve and Grow to enrich our understanding of who we are as an organization. These themes are one way of capturing how we have always expressed ourselves through our charitable objects.

It is my pleasure to be tasked with the role of guest editor for the first 2020 edition, exploring the theme of Witness. Of course, I must give credit and thanks to our editor, Stephanie Potter, for her excellent guidance and work in the production of this issue.

Doctors and dentists are in a position through their professional roles to influence patients, systems, and institutions. We can also influence outside of these roles by virtue of privilege. By integrating our faith and practice, we can be witnesses for the Lord. This is indeed a blessing, but at times also a challenge. How is this working for us? We asked several people connected to CMDA Canada to answer that question. We were truly fortunate to have a wonderful group of physicians, from various spheres of practice, agree to respond.

Two of these contributors are members of the CMDA Canada board. Dr. Lester Liao is a pediatrics resident in Toronto who is also a graduate of Tyndale Seminary. Lester gives us some insightful and challenging thoughts on how to engage our post-Christian culture. He takes the concept of “friendship evangelism” to a whole new level. He urges us to connect with and influence people through a Gospel brought to them by genuine love and empathy. We should do this based on a culturally appropriate understanding. He uses relevant and pertinent moral dilemmas faced by Christians and non-Christian alike, to demonstrate how we as Christians can witness despite our differences.

Our outgoing President Dr. Sheila Harding has extensive background and experience in academic medicine having been an associate dean of one of the nation’s medical schools. Sheila shares her thoughts, including an address given to medical graduates, outlining some challenges faced by academic Christian physicians. These include effective leadership and effective engagement. Being an effective mentor and teacher requires compassion and consideration for one’s students.

We were also privileged to receive submissions from two prominent physicians in the world of politics and medical management. Dr. Shawn Whalley who is past president of the OMA tells us that being a leader is messy. Being a Christian leader in medical politics is no different. Shawn addresses the challenges of upholding one’s Christian ideals while remaining pragmatic and realistic in one’s objectives. He advises us not to throw the baby out with the bathwater and certainly not before one dispenses with the soiled diaper! He shares with care the hard-learned lessons that have come at the cost of sacrificial leadership.

Dr. David Swann, former leader of the Alberta Liberal Party and retired MLA tells us, as someone who was “baptized into politics”, how he has come to understand how to be a follower of Christ in the world of politics. His article will challenge you to engage in policy making when and wherever you can. He asks us the proverbial question “What would Jesus do?”.
Dr. Theodore K. Fenske is a Clinical Professor with the Division of Cardiology at the University of Alberta, Staff Cardiologist at the C.K. Hui Heart Centre, and Director of Cardiac Rehabilitation for the Northern Alberta Program. Dr. Fenske is an executive member of the CMDA Edmonton Chapter. He is the proud father of three sons, Oliver, Cameron, and Joel. He and his wife Fanya are content to call Edmonton "home" where they are actively involved in the Christian community and young adult ministry.

Dr. Donato Gugliotta graduated from the University of Toronto in 1985 and began practicing as a Family Practice doctor practicing anesthesia in 1987. During his career, he split his practice and worked half time as a family doctor and half time in OR giving anesthesia. He began to transition to retirement in 2020. He lives with his lovely wife Susette in Trenton, Ontario. They are blessed to have both their married children and five grandchildren living close by and attending the same church. E-mail or call for photos!

Dr. Sheila Rutledge Harding's career as a hematologist has focused on mentoring and service. She has found ways to build bridges while speaking important truths. She is currently the National President of CMDA Canada. She does all of this with the abundant support of her husband Terry Harding.

Larry Worthen has been the Executive Director, Christian Medical and Dental Association of Canada since 2012. Prior to that, Larry served in a variety of leadership roles in the not for profit sector and in the Nova Scotia provincial government. Larry has a BA and a law degree from Dalhousie University in Halifax. He also has a MA in Theology as well as a Diploma in Adult Education. Larry has been married to Dr. Linda Gagnon since 1986. They have two children and five grandchildren. Larry has been an ordained Permanent Deacon in the Catholic Church since June 2012. His ministry consists primarily of pastoral care but he also assists the pastor in preaching and conducting baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Dr. Lester Liao is a pediatric rheumatology fellow at Sick Kids. He sits on the CMDA Canadianational board and lives in Toronto with his wife and three children.

Dr. David Swann graduated from medical school at the University of Alberta in 1973. He practiced as a family physician from 1975 to 1984 and then as a public health consultant from 1988 to 2004. From 2004-2019, he served as MLA for the riding of Calgary-Mountain View. His tenure as an MLA included several years as the leader of the Alberta Liberal Party. Dr. Swann is active within his community and was responsible for initiating the Healthy City Project in Calgary in 1987. Dr. Swann and his wife, Lauren, have three children. During his free time he enjoys peace and justice work, music and singing, jogging, woodworking and writing.

Dr. Shawn Whatley is an author, blogger, physician leader, and Past President of the Ontario Medical Association. Shawn helped bring stability during a time of intense turmoil and chaos at the OMA. Dr. Whatley has had his work broadly published in the news media, has a popular blog at www.shawnwhatley.com and has written for The Epoch Times, The Hill Times, The Medical Post, as well as, The Globe and Mail, and The Toronto Sun. Shawn’s blog has almost 3 million views: www.shawnwhatley.com and has written the book No More Lethal Waits. Dr. Whatley serves as a Munk Senior Fellow in Health Policy at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

Dr. Rose Zacharias has been an ER physician and Hospitlalist for 15 years at the Orilla Soldiers Memorial Hospital. She was recently elected Board Director at the Ontario Medical Association - term to begin May 2020. Dr. Zacharias Meeder is a mother of four and enjoys writing.
Following the Way in the Dark – Christian Leadership

SHAWN WHATLEY

**FEATURE**

After a few years in practice, many physicians get asked to serve in leadership. While it is nice to be noticed, many docs worry about the time commitment, bad outcomes, and the general hassle of meetings and politics. Do I really want to be part of the ‘dark-side’?

We often assume that leadership is special in a way that real life is not. Leadership is not special. It is like being in a fishbowl that doubles as an ashtray. Christian leadership is also unremarkable, and in the same way. It is Christianity lived less holy than we hoped: more exposed, and less comfortable. A second misconception is unique to physicians: we are practical materialists.

Most of us avoid the crisis by declination or by turning a blind eye. We have swallowed the red pill—a drug that wakes humans up from a simulated reality, in the sci-fi movie The Matrix. I realized that I knew nothing about leadership and nothing about medicare. I had been dreaming, blind to reality. If led to a string of other positions, all bent towards helping others see and receive the system at work around them.

This article is for those of you who have taken the red pill or are trying to decide. You have left your comfortable reality of caring for patients. Now, it is impossible for you to not see that patient outcomes often depend even more on the system than the care you provide. But as a believer, you face three unique conflicts.

First, leadership challenges a compartmentalized faith. Believers often get by as materialists at work and dualists afterhours. It works when no one watches closely but fails in leadership. Second, leadership might look like partnership with the world, which goes against the call to be separate. And third, many believers who work in public office try to force the Kingdom on the world.

HARMONY BETWEEN CHRIST AND BELIAL?

Many believers adopt a deep suspicion of public office long before we even know it.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light walk with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

...Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. (2 Cor 6:14-15, 17a)

The Apostle Paul liked to beat dead horses. He said the same thing six ways, so we had better understand. If separation from the world is a spectrum, we might put monastic life at one end and an unequivocally yoked marriage at the other.

**WHAT LEVEL OF PARTNERSHIP DOES 2 CORINTHIANS ALLOW?**

1. **PURISTS CALL FOR COMPLETE SEPARATION.** They meet the letter of their law by saying that yoking has nothing to do with physicality or vocation. It is spiritual. You can be in the world but not of it. But even if that was possible, it is not everyone agrees. It requires more space to discuss than Focus allows, but 2 Corinthians Chapter 6 presents a unique challenge that all believers must address.

What degree of entanglement is Christian? On this issue, many of us hold the same popular illogical position. We pursue secular careers; sign mortgages and leases; and buy stocks and bonds. We are fully entangled with the world. But we avoid leadership, because that would be worldly. Thirty-year mortgages with threats of prison are still pious, but a few years in parliament smells carnal.

Drawing an arbitrary line on a list of entanglements always fails. It is just another crude application of law to grace.

Instead, we might ask whether Jesus came to disentangle a club or to redeem a social system. We are the ambassadors to this reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-20). No question, it includes separation, but separation is only a means to an end. There will be times for monasteries and times for eating with publicans and sinners. Can you change a dirty diaper and escape unscented? It will depend on where you serve. Some organizations love diversity of opinion. Other organizations kick you out of causality unless you profess their woes beliefs. And there is a big difference between changing a dirty diaper and being forced to reach it. There will be times when we must resign or not stand for office in the world.

But even if you find a place to serve and can hold an authentic integrated faith, Christians still face a final crucial challenge.

BENEVOLENT DICTATORS

Did Jesus come to make disciples whether or not the disciples wanted to be made?

Progressivists plowed in the same furrow as Christians in the early 20th century. Each group shared the beliefs that 1) society needed to improve, and 2) they were the ones to improve it. In 1952, Eric Voegelin, political philosopher, wrote about modern Gnosticism and the move to bring about heaven on earth: to immunize the eschaton. He identified it as the source of tyranny and suffering from authoritarianism in the early 20th century.

Thomas Sowell, philosopher and economist, wrote about solutions versus trade-offs in his book, The Vision of the Anointed. Those with a sense of their own anointing want solutions for big social issues. Poverty, disease, and human suffering are concrete problems waiting to be solved by enlightened people. On the other hand, those who hold a tragic view of the world believe that we can definitely fix very little, but humans are experts at making things worse. Those with a tragic vision start by asking: Who gets to decide? What process will we follow? Who pays for the consequences of failure? What will we make worse? And what can we no longer do, if we pursue a particular solution?

We can always learn from other perspectives. But unless you are strictly antirealism, Christians believe the world is fallen and groans in expectation. We try to improve it, but our best is imperfect; we could make things worse. By definition, Christianity offers a tragic view of life. Of nihilistic, but tragic, nonefficiency.

Those with a materialistic view believe in other people's solutions on other people is what Christians call pride. It always causes suffering and chaos. Does that mean Christians should abandon principles and let everything go? Of course not. Christian leaders must live in the world between the ideal and the real. Life is spoiled and unclear. And at the same time, if we abandoned post every time we disagreed with a policy direction, we would never stay long enough to influence change.

But if we impose our policies on an unwilling populace, we become tyrants. Tyranny is wrong, but so is libertarianism. Christian leaders need to wrestle in the muddy space between the world and the Kingdom.

Steve Martin, as Inspector Jacques Clouseau in the Pink Panther, said, “Let me bring you up to speed. We know nothing. You are now up to speed.” Frederick Hayek, economist and philosopher, wrote about “the price system” for saying something similar. No one knows enough to control the economy. Even if someone did, he could not make sense of it.

We need existential others.

But humility is not ignorance. Leaders and believers must be readers. Robert Heilbroner, economist and historian, wrote that, “Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are
usually the slaves of some defunct economist.’ 
We must identify the ideas we take for 
given. If we lead healthcare, we might ask: 
What is health? What is care? What is medicine, 
politics, or the chief end of man? These are not 
theoretical questions for greedy fools, but rather 
read than see sick people. We either find 
our own answers, or we accept the answers of 
those around us.

The assumptions that hide behind every 
policy must bleed through the page and become 
obvious for us. We must know what we think, and 
how it differs from those around us, or we will 
promote popular opinion.

The West survives as one of a forgotten 
order. The simple ways of defining ourselves 
by what we oppose will not work any longer. We 
need something positive but not tyrannical. For 
example, if morality requires freedom, what kind 
of freedom is it? Are there limits? Should we 
hold a generally benevolent opinion of the state, 
or should we consider the state to be animated 
by fallen beings, like the rest of us?

FOLLOWING THE WAY IN THE DARK

Can you hold a counter-cultural, faithful, 
while building a secular vision?

An ex-pro hockey player—a committed 
believer—talked about his work as the team 
enforcer. What does it mean to be Christ-like, 
while punching someone’s nose? A Christian 
politician complained, “Why doesn’t anyone 
listen unless I use the F-word?” Three thousand 
years ago, Daniel had to reconcile service to 
Nebuchadnezzar with all that the pagan King 
stood for. Joseph did the same. Would the early- 
church believers in Caesar’s household have 
served well or sought to undermine Caesar’s 
vision?

The theme of this issue of Focus is Witness. What does it mean to follow the Way in the dark? Must we compartmentalize faith? And once in 
power, how should we apply it? Does leadership 
mean partnering with darkness? Does bringing 
light to darkness mean shining a flashlight 
from a safe distance, or does it look more like 
changing a dirty diaper with bare hands?

Having spent some time at it, I am sure of one 
things: We need more Christians in leadership. 
No matter what your activity—waterskiing, rock- 
climbing, or heart-surgery—you must help lead 
your community. The psalmist said, “In your 
light shall we see light,” (Ps 36:9). Christ came 
to bring light into darkness. If there is any 
threat in calling administration the ‘dark-side’, 
then Christians must go there. If we abandon the city 
gates, the city will fall.

The Call to Engage
DAVID SWANN
What is the link between my Christian faith and the 
secular world of politics? As a medical 
student I travelled with CMDs on a short term 
mision to Haiti in 1969. There I witnessed 
the impotence of medicine in the face of a 
dictatorship with corrupt and incompetent 
officials: abject poverty, mental and physical 
disease and injury, and widespread preventable 
defeats. I never thought of medicine in this way after that. Nor did I ever imagine I would 
choose to enter politics. Since then I’ve learned 
much about the psychological/social/spiritual 
challenges of my own life in medicine and the 
political/secular demands of political activity.

In 2002 I was thrown into Alberta politics for 
expressing in public, on behalf of Alberta 
Medical Officers, the growing scientific 
consensus on the need for government to 
acknowledge the science and take real action 
on climate warning. I was summarily fired by 
the Health Board Chairman (President of the 
local Progressive Conservative Association) 
and experienced a stressful and lonely period 
of uncertainty for the first time in which I and my 
wife, Luane, debated staying in Alberta or 
going to BC for a job opening.

While I had been active on peace and justice 
issues such as the Iraq sanctions and nuclear 
disarmament (Physicians for Global Survival), I 
had no experience and much trepidation about 
politics (public trust approximating that of used-
car salesmen). Ultimately I ran for provincial 
ofice in 2004 as was re-elected on the first of 
four terms. I was thrown back on my faith, my 
family and my limited experience as a public 
speaker/debater, after receiving strong support 
in my Calgary riding. 

At the age of 55 I understood the importance 
of public policy, having a preventive orientation 
and practice for 17 years. I understood the 
profound effect of healthy policy such as 
water and sewage standards, housing, and 
workplace health and safety standards, free 
access to healthcare and education. And I was 
concerned at the time about repeated attempts 
by the Progressive Conservative government 
of 30 years to privatize healthcare, in addition 
to my passion to address climate change.

I remembered the quotation of Rudolf 
Vichow that ‘Politics is medicine writ large’ – 
which also encouraged me to believe I could 
have even greater influence on the population 
health as a policy maker than as a monitor, 
implementor and regulator of public health 
policy.

While I have experienced the serious 
limitations of partisan (party) politics in moving 
healthy policy forward, I am more convinced 
than ever that citizens, including Christian 
physicians, have rarely engaged with their 
representatives sufficiently to achieve policy 
results that truly reflect the public interest.

I’m particularly interested in the resilience of 
physicians (at least in Alberta where I served for 
15 years) and reluctance to engage on issues 
outside of their own professional interests. 
Anyone interested in health as much as illness 
and injury, must be engaged in political activity 
and advocacy on issues such as poverty, 
homelessness, racism, violence, gun control, 
environmental degradation, and determinants of 
addiction and mental illness.

Our public esteem, influence and breadth 
of knowledge, as well as Christian faith, surely 
calls us to the larger societal roots of human 
wellbeing. Micah 6:8 has been a guide for me: 
‘Seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly with 
your God.’

Understandably most physicians may not 
feel well prepared to talk about such systemic 
issues but there are ample resources in 
experts and literature if we are willing to invest 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain 
in these fast-changing times. And I remain
I am a mother of four and bedtime is exhausting. Last night, when I already had one hand on the Netflix remote and the other reaching for a glass of “you did it!” my youngest caught me making a quick exit out his bedroom door. He had just finished reading A Dog’s Purpose by W. Bruce Cameron, and after I tip-toed away, having planted a quick kiss on his sleeping cheek, I heard his voice: “Hey mom - what’s my purpose?” My footsteps briefly slowed. “Hmmm... Hold that thought honey. I’m sure Daddy’s on his way up to buck you in.”

At what point earlier in my day had I sat accumulated to where sitting with my son to ponder the meaning of his life was going to be a hard “no”? I started to play back the reel. I am an Emergency Room doctor and at 7am, I was logging on to the hospital’s electronic medical record for the third time. Apparently, the glitches hadn't been sorted out. At noon I was twenty patients into my shift; treating people in the hallway, dealing with a crusty radiologist and reaching for the Tylenol. By 6pm, I was stuck in traffic, regretting terribly how quickly I had delivered some life-altering bad news. By 7pm, I was finally home, but a bit broken, wondering how I was going to turn this all around; finish up my charts after dinner and come back tomorrow to do it all again. Tired. Emotionally exhausted, cynical and are struggling to stay engaged in the very conversations that engage the conversation.

There is a purpose to my being that has nothing to do with my doing. There is a purpose to my being that has nothing to do with my doing. I have hard days, but I have embraced a mission. There is a purpose to my being that has nothing to do with my doing. I have wondered why the ups and downs of my career affect me so deeply. Maybe it is because I am the oldest of three girls and the child of immigrant parents whose only way forward was to work hard. Perhaps my Mennonite grandparents were formed at the hospital have extended into a small circle of people who are for me, no matter what. A physician has challenged me to write about my convictions and this has been an amazing opportunity for self-growth and development. And I am very secure, knowing that for now, my work is remunerated well and provides for my family.

I have hard days, but I have embraced a mission. There is a purpose to my being that has nothing to do with my doing. I have wondered why the ups and downs of my career affect me so deeply. Maybe it is because I am the oldest of three girls and the child of immigrant parents whose only way forward was to work hard. Perhaps my Mennonite grandparents were formed at the hospital have extended into a small circle of people who are for me, no matter what. A physician has challenged me to write about my convictions and this has been an amazing opportunity for self-growth and development. And I am very secure, knowing that for now, my work is remunerated well and provides for my family.

I have hard days, but I have embraced a mission. There is a purpose to my being that has nothing to do with my doing. I have wondered why the ups and downs of my career affect me so deeply. Maybe it is because I am the oldest of three girls and the child of immigrant parents whose only way forward was to work hard. Perhaps my Mennonite grandparents were formed at the hospital have extended into a small circle of people who are for me, no matter what. A physician has challenged me to write about my convictions and this has been an amazing opportunity for self-growth and development. And I am very secure, knowing that for now, my work is remunerated well and provides for my family.

I have wondered why the ups and downs of my career affect me so deeply. Maybe it is because I am the oldest of three girls and the child of immigrant parents whose only way forward was to work hard. Perhaps my Mennonite grandparents were formed at the hospital have extended into a small circle of people who are for me, no matter what. A physician has challenged me to write about my convictions and this has been an amazing opportunity for self-growth and development. And I am very secure, knowing that for now, my work is remunerated well and provides for my family.

Many of you, we have spent the last few weeks in shock at the global escalation of the coronavirus pandemic. It has forced us to assess what we can do without risking the safety of our members, their families, and their patients. The Student Leaders Conference could not be held in person this past weekend as it had been for decades. This year we had prayerfully invested in the program which had been running successfully thanks to the tireless work of Dr. Dan Reily. The idea of canceling it entirely felt like a disservice to the students and the work of the team. Our entire planning team, which included members and our National Office Staff, came together to redevelop our content for digital media in the week leading up to the SLC. 21 students joined us online for a powerful SLC. While it wasn’t the weekend we were expecting, we were moved by how the Holy Spirit multiplied our efforts to grow our latest generation of student leaders.

The University of Alberta campus; the launch of our video curriculum Rooted in Christ; advocacy for conscience rights and against the expansion of euthanasia; successful retreats and conferences; and so much more. Thank you for your continued support. Please keep us in your prayers as we enter into 2020 with optimism. Despite all the many challenges in the world, we belong to the Lord!
Brought Before Men
DONATO OGGIOLITA

But after all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. And so you will bear testimony to me. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. (Luke 21:12-15)

In these passages, Jesus instructs His disciples regarding how they are to behave when they are brought before rulers and authorities. He encourages them not to be anxious about what they will say or how they will answer their adversaries. They are to depend on the Holy Spirit for the answers and for what they are to say. The disciples can remain calm because it is the Holy Spirit who will provide them the words to speak. Recently, Members of CMDA Canada found themselves in a situation where they had to bear witness before the authorities. They are indeed an unfamiliar and uncomfortable position. Please consider, as you read, what it was like, what it meant then and still means now.

In order to establish background and context, let’s first take the opportunity to review, in brief, the timeline of the CMDA Canada fight for Conscience Rights and the constitutional challenge against effective refusal.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled against the criminality of assisted suicide on the constitutional grounds that it violated the personal right to life, liberty, and security, in the February 2015 Carter case. The Court argued that a person might be in danger of taking their own life prematurely, because of the restrictions of the old law. The previous ruling inhibited patients from enlisting the help of other people to assist them in dying. No one, not even a health care giver, could legally help them to end their life.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) anticipated a change in the law because of Carter and started modifying several of their policies. The first was Professional Obligations and Human Rights (POHR) in March 2015, followed by a revision to the policy on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID). In June 2016, Quebec preemptively passed provincial MAID legislation in June 2014 before the federal government passed Bill C-14 in May 2016. The federal law was considered a compromise by the opposing sides and was therefore disliked by both on various grounds. It introduced the professional basis for the societal norm. Jesus had much to say about how the Pharisees did this and how, in essence, they were misleading the people. He also spoke out against the national ruling authority, the Sanhedrin. This level of government was accountable to the occupying Roman authority. On non-capital offenses, the Sanhedrin largely had functional control. Only when they wanted to impose the death penalty did they consult the Roman governor. For Jesus, there was a time to speak out (John 18:33-19:11) but also a time to remain quiet (Luke 23: 8-9). This He did even in the face of unjust treatment, in order to further His mission. He was wrongfully charged and unjustly tried which culminated in capital punishment. This was all part of the plan. Keeping this in mind, let us go back and consider the position they had long supported.

Regarding how they are to behave when they are brought before men. It is the Holy Spirit who will provide them the words to choose to obey God rather than the ruling authority, the Sanhedrin. All this resulted in the court accepting our faith. This experience allowed us to bear witness to the society. In so doing we want to emphasize how the applicants in the CMDA et al v CPSO court case did this to glorify His name. We did this to proclaim the truth found in the Word. We did this to glorify His name. We did this to project and preserve a liberty both for us and for those who would come after us, the liberty to simultaneously practice medicine and our faith. We knew that this was a spiritual battle as much as a conflict over the sought-after position and application of truth. We hoped that through all this, the truth of God’s Word would be evident and influence some to know and perhaps seek Him.

When I was asked to submit my name as an individual applicant for the legal challenge, consider the outcome in the light of eternity and God’sunchanging truth. I am no different. The legal defeat itself is not an end but merely part of the journey. I see more as a hurdle in the race of life, albeit a hurdle that was knocked over rather than successfully vaulted.

We do not know, nor can we even guess at what God will do and has done with our advocacy efforts and specifically our failed legal challenge. There have been and will be additional activity and benefits even though we aren’t pursuing the legal route further. We at CMDA Canada have grown tremendously in our awareness and skills when it comes to advocacy efforts and specifically our failed legal challenge. This intolerance, the scorned basis of our arguments and the opposition stressed, demanded defeat. Their legal defeat is not an end but merely part of the journey. We indeed were driven to pursue the legal route further. We at CMDA Canada have grown tremendously in our awareness and skills when it comes to advocacy efforts and specifically our failed legal challenge.

As disciples, we are called to obediently follow God’s leading. We are called to be witnesses as we face the challenges of what the world expects of us and when we find ourselves. That is our mandate. The outcome, which is in God’s hands, should be secondary to us. We know that God is sovereign and that His will shall be done. This we can say. However, there is a certain amount of uncertainty about the particulars of our witness in advocacy because of the many factors that determine our thoughts and actions. Thus, it is critical to depend on God step by step as we are led by His direction. God’s wonderful mercy extends to us even as we may misinterpret or overlook His direction. God will even use our mistakes to accomplish His will.

As the CMDA Canada goes forward in advocating for what we feel is important to God, in the context of our sphere of influence, we continue to depend on His leading. Pray along with us that we stay in His will.
OUR CULTURE IS RAPIDLY EVOLVING AND IT SEEMS THAT WE ARE HAVING A HARD TIME COMING ALONGSIDE IT. I do not mean that we should adopt the popular ideas of the day or mold our lifestyles accordingly. I do mean that the Bible calls us to be faithful witnesses and, in this, requires us to meet our culture where it is. This means understanding and engaging its narratives and questions with the wisdom trump of the Gospel. This is not an easy task, but we must strive to accomplish it together.

STRANGERS IN A FOREIGN LAND

Paul was ready to adopt himself to different kinds of people. He was a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks (1 Cor 9:19-20). To the former group, he emphasized his identity as an educated Pharisee. To the latter group, he quoted their poets and philosophers. Paul was not the first to adopt this approach. He mirrored Christ Himself, who took the initiative to adapt to us. He was in the heavenly realm, but He made the earth His dwelling place. He took on human form. He lived among us (John 1:14).

We must learn from Paul and Christ’s examples. We are called to enter the experience of those around us and to connect in ways that show our understanding of those around us and to connect in ways that show our understanding of them. Our culture is largely secular. People look at us oddly when we mention the ideas of God and sin. They do not see us in the same way or the same light. This means understanding and engaging its narratives and questions with the wisdom trump of the Gospel. This is not an easy task, but we must strive to accomplish it together.

More than Morals: Sacrificial Love in an Existential World

LESTER LIAO

As a student of philosophy at Oxford, I have been struck by the fact that many philosophers have focused on the moral aspects of euthanasia. This is understandable, given the complexity of the issue. However, I believe that a more comprehensive approach is necessary. In this essay, I will argue that a focus on the moral aspects of euthanasia is not sufficient. We must also consider the existential aspects of the issue.

I will begin by introducing the concept of sacrificial love. This is a form of love that goes beyond the purely moral. It involves giving oneself for the benefit of another, even when it is difficult or painful. This type of love is often associated with religious traditions, but it can also be found in non-religious contexts.

Sacrificial love is particularly relevant in the context of euthanasia. In many cases, people who choose to end their own lives are doing so for the benefit of others. They may feel that they are no longer able to contribute to society or that they are a burden on their loved ones.

In this sense, euthanasia is not simply a moral issue. It is an existential one as well. We must consider the ways in which people make decisions about their own lives and the ways in which those decisions affect others.

In conclusion, I believe that a focus on the moral aspects of euthanasia is not sufficient. We must also consider the existential aspects of the issue. Only then can we hope to understand the complexity of this problem and find ways to address it.


I must here distinguish between our arguments in the public square regarding euthanasia and our role as Christians in society living as people who are for or against euthanasia. My discussion here is limited to the latter group. We will not engage in public debate or public forums, feed this pull myself at times. But such a posture does not help us to be gracious. It embodies us instead in conflicts that move away from the Gospel and more toward tribal mentalities. All things become framed by how they relate to euthanasia groups. In this perspective, just as on this first point is not what we do or don’t do. As much as we may try to frame the issue around how we want to protect the vulnerable, which is a pillar of the Christian life, it is not perceived that way because we have come to be defined primarily as people who are against certain practices. A focus on euthanasia will leave our Gospel witness truncated, and we are left with ineffective means to even confront euthanasia.

We must consider the ways in which people make decisions about their own lives and the ways in which those decisions affect others.

In conclusion, I believe that a focus on the moral aspects of euthanasia is not sufficient. We must also consider the existential aspects of the issue. Only then can we hope to understand the complexity of this problem and find ways to address it.


I am not ignoring the fact that moral issues are integral to the Gospel. Neither

We can articulate and even sympathize with them.

We must recognize that we are in a new and foreign culture. It is post-Christian. We cannot presume that our worldview and morals are shared with those around us. When we think about reaching people halfway across the world, the need to understand the language and culture of the people is something we intuitively grasp. And yet, here in a historically Christian culture, we have grown comfortable and forgotten this basic principle. People look at us oddly when we mention the ideas of God and sin. They do not see us in the same way or the same light. This means understanding and engaging its narratives and questions with the wisdom trump of the Gospel. This is not an easy task, but we must strive to accomplish it together.


I am not ignoring the fact that moral issues are integral to the Gospel. Neither

We can articulate and even sympathize with them.

We must recognize that we are in a new and foreign culture. It is post-Christian. We cannot presume that our worldview and morals are shared with those around us. When we think about reaching people halfway across the world, the need to understand the language and culture of the people is something we intuitively grasp. And yet, here in a historically Christian culture, we have grown comfortable and forgotten this basic principle. People look at us oddly when we mention the ideas of God and sin. They do not see us in the same way or the same light. This means understanding and engaging its narratives and questions with the wisdom trump of the Gospel. This is not an easy task, but we must strive to accomplish it together.


I am not ignoring the fact that moral issues are integral to the Gospel. Neither

We can articulate and even sympathize with them.

We must recognize that we are in a new and foreign culture. It is post-Christian. We cannot presume that our worldview and morals are shared with those around us. When we think about reaching people halfway across the world, the need to understand the language and culture of the people is something we intuitively grasp. And yet, here in a historically Christian culture, we have grown comfortable and forgotten this basic principle. People look at us oddly when we mention the ideas of God and sin. They do not see us in the same way or the same light. This means understanding and engaging its narratives and questions with the wisdom trump of the Gospel. This is not an easy task, but we must strive to accomplish it together.


I am not ignoring the fact that moral issues are integral to the Gospel. Neither

We can articulate and even sympathize with them.

We must recognize that we are in a new and foreign culture. It is post-Christian. We cannot presume that our worldview and morals are shared with those around us. When we think about reaching people halfway across the world, the need to understand the language and culture of the people is something we intuitively grasp. And yet, here in a historically Christian culture, we have grown comfortable and forgotten this basic principle. People look at us oddly when we mention the ideas of God and sin. They do not see us in the same way or the same light. This means understanding and engaging its narratives and questions with the wisdom trump of the Gospel. This is not an easy task, but we must strive to accomplish it together.


I am not ignoring the fact that moral issues are integral to the Gospel. Neither

We can articulate and even sympathize with them.

We must recognize that we are in a new and foreign culture. It is post-Christian. We cannot presume that our worldview and morals are shared with those around us. When we think about reaching people halfway across the world, the need to understand the language and culture of the people is something we intuitively grasp. And yet, here in a historically Christian culture, we have grown comfortable and forgotten this basic principle. People look at us oddly when we mention the ideas of God and sin. They do not see us in the same way or the same light. This means understanding and engaging its narratives and questions with the wisdom trump of the Gospel. This is not an easy task, but we must strive to accomplish it together.
is the importance of being a sanctified community being derogated (1 Pt 1:16). Yet under the New Covenant, that distinction does not exist among those who believe. The challenge is not to believe that God’s grace was more powerful than their sin. Just as we must remember God’s moral precepts in the context of grace, we must engage culturally with a mindset of grace. This does not excuse tackling a moral issue directly. It just means that if we directly stand against euthanasia, our opposition must be salted with the Gospel so that it advocates know that we still love and understand them.

Understanding the role of our behaviours is critical because Christianity has come to be understood only as the moral issues. When we focus exclusively on moral issues, we are predictable and fit into the narratives that shape our culture and set the agenda. This is problematic because “Christian” evokes a set of ideas that go together. If just one of these ideas is highlighted, the rest follow suit. Just as the word fascist conjures up the notion of Nazi, so does Christian recall bigotry and homophobia, especially if we mention anything about sexuality. This link has become so powerful that the very word Christian is almost synonymous with bigot. “Christian” becomes meaningless in itself.5

Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy
A Brief History of Thought: A Philosophical Guide to Living

Our feelings have become the prominent metric for what is truth from “out there” to in our minds. He was the father of Romanticism and its offspring, Existentialism. This latter rejected the sterility of the rationalist tradition and its inability to make sense of our deepest feelings and experiences.6 It emphasized over the mind the life of the will and the creation of values, goals, ends.7 The existentialist believes that our own existence is the most important principle in the world. We cannot take our life for granted. We cannot try to have no meaning just by being, but therefore must create meaning and value for ourselves. As Sartre said, “man is nothing other than what he makes of himself.”8 The emphasis is on our internal world. Our feelings have become the prominent metric for what is true and worthwhile. Few people identify explicitly as existentialists, but it is in the cultural air we breathe. Follow your heart. You need to find your own meaning. You need to define yourself. You do these. Saying all things touch on the idea that our individual existence is primary and our inner world most trustworthy. This is significant because how one experiences life is how life is evaluated. This is not a matter of opinion or of personal opinion only. It is a question of meaning and value. This will grow as we help our neighbours to furthermore see that it is not just this one Christian who is an exception, but that Christians as a whole loving. This will be understood in a completely different light. On the surface, a husband kisses his wife. His may assume he does so only because he is supposed to. It leaves her feeling unloved. But if she knows he heart, if she knows that indeed he is supposed to, but that more importantly he desires to, it will completely change her reception of that gesture of love.

If we unite this backdrop approach with a reassurance of grace and the practice of love, we will undermine the notion that Christians are thoughtless, pro-life misgovernors. We must plough the tough soil before we sow.

OUR HOPE FOR OUR NEIGHBOURS

I have spent much time discussing moral issues. This is because it is the setting in which we live, and any attempt to be Christian in public will require us to be thoughtful in our conversations around moral. But as we have established, we care about far more than morality. We want people to see the kingdom of God, to see the Gospel, to see the meaning available to all the people of our world.9 Our task is to draw the connection between the longings of our culture and how they are ultimately fulfilled in the Gospel. Those longings may seem at first dangerous or completely antithetical to the Gospel: autonomy, freedom, power, sex. This makes some of us uncomfortable. We feel we have to defend the Gospel for the impact it has on our culture, through Christ that we become truly free and able to make wise choices. Christ gives the power to overcome our anxieties and weaknesses when we abide in Him. The desire for pleasure and intimacy are only heightened when they are sanctified in the venues that God has given us. Rather than simply resist, we should run with the momentum of these desires and redirect them to Him.

This is where we have encountered our greatest difficulties. We have lost touch in terms of how to communicate to a culture that has rejected us, where they are, what they are thinking, what they are reading and reading these books? What are they worried about? We cannot answer these questions because we do not permit ourselves to be dwelling among our neighbours. We do not share our lives. Sometimes we fear we are being enables. Sometimes we fear being influenced in the wrong direction. Sometimes we hide our desires only wish. There is some wisdom in these thoughts. But when we are rooted in our communities and cleave ourselves to Him, we do not need to be afraid. For thereby fear and apprehension is what has undermined people’s confidence in the Christian religion. We seem to be more concerned with our own interests than those of others. Again, this may not always be true. But it is frequently the perception. In a world that increasingly ignores truth, we must take the conversations to where people are. We must speak to the reasons of both mind and heart.

Sometimes our questioning is actually subtle. Sometimes our questions means spending more time with people that do not think like us. It means loving them anyway. It means just as I prioritize time for my small group, I must prioritize time to be with the people that work. We should have our colleagues in our homes and share meals with them. They should know us as people with spouses and friends. Communication differences at work can quickly break the pressures of everyday life. This must supersede and indeed overpowered their impression of us as “Christians.” Our combined personal witnesses can then begin to shape the public perception of Christians. Nonbelievers will see media portayals and know to say to others. I know a Christian and she is loving. This will grow as we help our neighbours to see that despite the pressure of life or the experience of parenthood. But specifically, in the context of being Christian or pro-life draws out certain reactions. A rationalist may see those ideas with fresh significance.

Our neighbours may know that Christians evangelize. But when they know us, when they know our hearts, the perception of our words and gestures will change. Our neighbours begin to see that each intentional action is an act of love. And there is no doubt that there is a different kind of love. Sometimes we fear being influenced in the wrong direction. Sometimes we fear being enables. Sometimes we fear being influenced in the wrong direction. Sometimes we hide our desires. There is some wisdom in these thoughts. But when we are rooted in our communities and cleave ourselves to Him, we do not need to be afraid. For thereby fear and apprehension is what has undermined people’s confidence in the Christian religion. We seem to be more concerned with our own interests than those of others. Again, this may not always be true. But it is frequently the perception. In a world that increasingly ignores truth, we must take the conversations to where people are. We must speak to the reasons of both mind and heart.

Sometimes our questioning is actually subtle. Sometimes our questions means spending more time with people that do not think like us. It means loving them anyway. It means just as I prioritize time for my small group, I must prioritize time to be with the people that work. We should have our colleagues in our homes and share meals with them. They should know us as people with spouses and friends. Communication differences at work can quickly break the pressures of everyday life. This must supersede and indeed overpowered their impression of us as “Christians.” Our combined personal witnesses can then begin to shape the public perception of Christians. Nonbelievers will see media portayals and know to say to others. I know a Christian and she is loving. This will grow as we help our neighbours to see that despite the Christian stance on sexuality, but they would appreciate a friend that would love them sacrificially. We love because He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). This is what Jesus does for us. It is what we must do for others.10

Leadership Lessons from the Academy

Shelia Rutledge Harding

I JOINED THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN’S COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN THE FALL OF 1988. Although I didn’t feel compelled to be an “academic” in the conventional sense of clinician, researcher, and educator, the position offered an appealing combination of a tertiary care clinical setting that the practice of Hematology requires together with a smaller city that better aligned with my family’s preferred lifestyle. We had been living in Toronto as my husband was completing his residency when I enjoyed teaching. I’m good at it. I’m motivated to improve the educational experiences of students. Much of my career has been encapsulated in the phrase “other duties as assigned” as I moved from one area of need to the next. That led to positions in educational administration. In due course, I became the Associate Dean Education, with responsibilities from pre-Admission through Continuation Medical Professional Education, a role I occupied for 12 years. I’m now happily back to being a clinician and teacher.

Working in Babylon is a lesson in learning to compromise without being compromised. It provided me with opportunities to witness, to be and teacher.

Examples:

Early on, I was invited to attend an extra-curricular event during which a pro-choice advocate declared that she was speaking for “all young, intelligent, well-educated, independent women.” I was able to stand up, claim her description of me as an individual, and then state that she didn’t speak for me. In that moment, I became known to the students – for good or for ill – as a pro-life ally.

Some years later, another generation of students asked me to participate in another event to discuss the death of Tracy Latimer, to be billed Murder or Mercy? When I asked how they could be sure which side I’d fall on, they laughed and replied, “We guessed.”

We (none of this is done alone) were able to keep thorny issues about abortion and euthanasia out of our local admissions processes.

We preserved space in the curriculum for the expression of minority views regarding subjects like abortion through the use of “structured controversy” as an instructional teaching strategy.

We provided advice to students locally and nationally in navigating difficult ethical issues.

Details are confidential, but I’ve been able to assist both incoming and graduating medical students on the subject of leadership. Although somewhat tangential to the theme of witness, that address, which began as a paper for my Master of Organizational Leadership work, demonstrates some of the ways in which a career in academic medicine can be used in that way. What follows has been modified slightly for publication.

Whatever lies ahead, you are already members of the medical profession. And that means, necessarily, that you are teachers (after all, that’s what the word doctor means) and that you are leaders, whether or not you choose to be. The only question is whether you will be good teachers and good leaders.

Because my approach to leadership is inextricably bound to my vocation as teacher, so too my understanding of leadership is inextricably bound to my understanding of teaching. I’ll begin there.

The following two propositions are from my personal dossier:

An effective teacher loves her students and loves her subject. Love for her students elicits unselfish, trustworthy and benevolent action on their behalf. Love for her subject spurs passion – fire in the belly – and the “disposition… to say that someone possesses integrity is to say that that person is almost predictable in the way he or she will prudentially judge the relative importance of things done.” It is the task of the leaders to be innovative in modeling, inspiring, enabling and empowering the development of their communities. As leaders, we should make it a priority to celebrate victories, small and large.

ABOUT FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

Paul of Tarsus wrote, “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” 1 It is chosen as a virtue foundational to effective leadership.

Faith is about “stepping out and taking action without having all the answers.”2 To be truly effective in serving the vision, the people we lead need the courage to act in the face of uncertainty. They need to know that we have faith in them and their abilities, and that they, too, should act in faith, taking reasonable risks, that they can make mistakes, and possessing the courage to let them be consumed.

Hope is an essential ingredient in leadership. The hope “that moves the mountains” can get extraordinary people to transcend the difficulties of today and envision the potentialities of tomorrow. Hope enables people to bounce back even after being stressed, stretched, and depressed. Hope enables people to find the will and the way to unleashed greatness.3 That brings us to love. By love I mean both “passion – fire in the belly – and the ‘disposition…

1 S. L. Rutledge, personal communication, 1967.
3 Kouzes & Posner, pg. 22.
6 Carey, pg 6.
10 Carey, pg. 6.

10 Carey, pg. 8.
12 Kouzes & Posner, pg. 22.
16 Kouzes & Posner, pg. 33.
18 Kouzes & Posner, pg. 22.
Western Student Retreat Reflection

NICO LA HOKWORD (UBC MEDICINE CLASS OF 2023)

The 2020 CMDA CANADA WESTERN STUDENT RETREAT WAS A TIME OF REST, REFLECTION, AND FELLOWSHIP. At blissful Camp Chestermere, we enjoyed great food, conversations, activities and of course learning. In a time in society where being a Christian medical student is rare, it was amazing to be surrounded by beloved students and mentors who shared incredible insight. I left the retreat feeling refreshed and encouraged to continue standing up for what I believe in.

The theme of the retreat: Sex, Money and Power, sounded intimidating at first but was surprisingly amazing to hear from likeminded students and professors. The theme was all about the power we have as leaders in medicine to use to be reminded of the biblical truth. Our time of learning was enhanced by time to have judgment free small group discussions about everything we were learning. I was inspired by other’s vulnerability and life stories and felt motivated to fully embrace the difficulties and the joy of being a Christian medical student.

In addition to hearing life giving truth, we also had time to enjoy each other’s company and replace in times of worship. In my free time, I enjoyed learning how to play 2-step, dancing in jam sessions and participating in the annual hockey game. Upon arriving and hearing about the hockey game, I immediately regretted deciding on my figure skates, instead of my hockey skates. Has anyone else attempted to play hockey with a toe-pick on the front of your blade? Well, I’ll tell you that between the cracks in the ice, and my toe-picks, I didn’t always stay upright! Despite the -20 degree brisk winter air, we felt cozy and had warm spirits. I loved gathering around, joining in song both in student-led worship and jam sessions. If you ever want a place to revive your church camps songs and actions, the WSR is just the place to go!

I believe the friendships made at the retreat are invaluable and will make electives across Western Canada friendlier in the future. I left the retreat encouraged to fill my mind daily not just with medical knowledge, but also with biblical knowledge as well. I now know that there is a support system for any Christian medical or dental student and I am equipped with practical ways navigate the world of sex, money and power. I feel blessed to have met all the incredible people who made the retreat possible and hope to attend again one day. I am encouraged by the fact that whatever path I pursue, God is in control. “Wherever I go, your hand will guide me; your strength will empower me” Psalm 139:10

In the days of social distancing and stay-at-home movement, I reminisce about the time of fellowship, face to face, with brothers and sisters in Christ. How blissfully oblivious were we to realize the mundane yet essential blessings in our lives. How strange it is to think what feels like months ago — hugging, shaking hands, sharing meals, and laughing with fellow believers in Christ — was only a week ago.

Fellowship is important, not only because God has told us so, but also because to gather with likeminded individuals who share faith in Christ and in turn mutual goals and values is both encouraging and grounding. Partly for this reason, I joined CMDA as I entered medical school, prayerfully hoping to find a Christian community that can hold me accountable as I continue my medical training. There are tough ethical issues waiting ahead in medicine and dentistry, I praying that God would guide me through those who have walked the path before me, and that together we would be His testimony in this world, reflecting His glory through our lives and actions, and advancing His kingdom under His sovereign will. God answered my prayer, and blessedy found myself amongst a group of more than twenty colleagues and friends — brothers and sisters. Each Wednesday we share lunch together, study the Word together, pray for each other and people in our lives who do not know Christ yet together. With this fellowship, God made the transition of moving to a different city and joining a new environment much easier for me.

Under God’s grace, four months of medical school flew by, and in January, I had the opportunity to attend the Eastern Student Retreat, meeting Christian medical and dental students, residents, and staff across Eastern Canada. The topic for this year’s retreat was interestingly singleness, dating, and marriage. We had the pleasure of inviting Debra Fletia, a licensed Christian Counselor specialized in relationship issues and the author of the popular blog TrueLoveDates.com to join us and talk about one of the most intimate forms of fellowship. The Couch was also introduced, where we had the chance to ask doctors, both single and married, for their advice on being a Christian doctor, on balancing personal life with work, and on career guidance in general.

It was apparent to me that two common themes emerged from the talk and our discussion, namely the importance of maintaining personal spiritual health and practicing sacrificial love as a Christian. In Debra’s talk, she emphasized the essentially of having a close relationship with God to grow and strengthen our relationship with each other, especially in the context of one of the deepest forms of fellowship, marriage. Our spiritual health can have a direct impact on the health of our relationship. It is only through a strong foundation built from close relationship with God that we are able to grow and be sanctified, reminded and renewed each day by His Word to “stand up one another to love and good works” and “encouraging one another” (Heb 10: 24-25). From this foundation, we learn and are strengthened by the Holy Spirit to practice sacrificial love in our relationships, especially in marriage, as God calls us to be imitators of Him, walk in love, for Christ loved us and gave himself up for us (Eph 5:5).

As many have shared during the retreat, this sacrificial love could take different forms. In terms of having the humility to change, and repent for forgiveness; having the selflessness to give up precious time and energy to serve others; having the generosity to support the needy financially; and ultimately, loving our neighbours as ourselves. Sacrificial love is inconvenient, but sacrificial love is what deepens Christ-centered fellowship and demonstrates to the world what Christianity is: “No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us” (1 John 4:12).

If I came to the retreat empty-handed (figuratively speaking), I left it hands full. New friendships were made, fun times were shared, and delicious meals were enjoyed: my body and mind were both nourished. Now I know that there is a greater fellowship of Christian doctors and dentists across Eastern Canada who shares a deep bond of love and strives to demonstrate this love to the world. As covid-19 strikes and many of those whom I met during the retreat are at the forefront battling this pandemic, I witness their demonstration of sacrificial love: taking the risk of being exposed to the virus, putting in extra hours at work, serving in needed capacities beyond their usual scope of practice, while still finding time to bake treats for their colleagues and teams. They set great examples for me, encouraging me to seek and serve my community in whatever capacities I can. I look forward to the time, when I get to meet them face to face again, and enjoy their presence and the sweet fellowship in Christ.
Climate Concerns Meet the Gospel: Protecting the Environment without Forsaking the Vulnerable

T.K. Fenske

Issue 1 | April 2020

This is part of a two article series by Dr. Fenske on climate concerns. Please look for the follow up article in the next issue, which will deal with aspects of environmentalism to champion and to challenge.

Climate concerns are widely viewed as the defining issue of our time, and environmental injury our greatest threat. The media is inundated with dismal forecasts of overpopulation, resource exhaustion, and impending catastrophic global warming. I doubt many missed the widely broadcasted images of a swirling Greta Thunberg delivering her scolding message of environmental shame. And it seems that every earthquake, hurricane, or wildfire, no matter where they occur on the planet nor the circumstances, gets attributed to climate change as the cause. In short, the environmental movement has captured the imagination and fears of this generation. So, although I’ve previously spoken to the important issues of environmental health, including to governmental representatives, this essay is not a cardiology review of the potential health dangers of environmental pollution. It is more an exploration, or even a warning, of the present dangers of the worldview underlying the environmental movement. It is the ambition of this paper to first compare and contrast the Christian ethic of environmental stewardship with the secular worldview of environmentalism. Secondly, the paper will highlight aspects of the environmental movement that we, as Christians, should support, and aspects that we actually need to oppose. Like the tip of an iceberg, what we hear in the media is only the proverbial tip (and seemingly innocuous) portion of the massive environmental propaganda machine lying just below the surface. However, the worldview of environmentalism is hardly benign. It challenges Scripture at several critical points with important implications for how we understand reality, how we interpret Scripture at several critical points with important implications for how we understand reality, how we interpret Scripture, and to challenge.

What is Christian about Team Leadership?

LARRY WORTHEN

Management literature is filled with references to the virtues of team leadership. Leaders who use a team approach keep their employees engaged, invite them into the decision making and help them develop to become leaders in their own right. The alternative is portrayed as a leader who uses a “command and control” management style, which is viewed as “intuitive” and based on need, makes unilateral decisions without consultation and wants to keep their employees weak and dependent so they will never leave. The management literature would have you believe that this approach is “good” while the latter would be considered “bad”.

Is this value judgement accurate? Does team leadership have some precedent in Christianity? Is the team leadership concept merely another passing trend that has infiltrated into thinking on the coasts of modernism’s nanny

Management literature is filled with references to the virtues of team leadership. Leaders who use a team approach keep their employees engaged, invite them into the decision making and help them develop to become leaders in their own right. The alternative is portrayed as a leader who uses a “command and control” management style, which is viewed as “intuitive” and based on need, makes unilateral decisions without consultation and wants to keep their employees weak and dependent so they will never leave. The management literature would have you believe that this approach is “good” while the latter would be considered “bad”.

Is this value judgement accurate? Does team leadership have some precedent in Christianity? Is the team leadership concept merely another passing trend that has infiltrated into thinking on the coasts of modernism’s nanny 

than parrot the popularized doomsday rhetoric, albeit couched in scriptural jargon. Many environmentalists go even further by claiming that our time has run out, and predict a “climate genocide” regardless of how immediate or radical the attempts taken to alter our present course. The preservation of the natural, environmentalist, and guardian of the universe, environmentalism is left in a bête noir state of fear, holding onto an impervious secular view of our final destiny. As William Ralph Inge wisely observed, “We can’t tell the future; we can’t even command an end, we have no need an exorcist, and has produced one.”

Holding to a Biblical worldview, we can certainly agree that the planet has an end date. The difference, of course, is that Scripture details that this end will occur in accordance with God’s providential plan, independent of man’s shuffling about. As outlined by Apostle Peter, “the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of the ungodly [...] the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be left bare” (2 Peter 3:7-10). Our citizenship, then, isn’t in a global social state, but in a heavenly one (Hebrews 12:22). It isn’t dependent upon carbon reduction, but has been secured for us by Christ’s atonement on the cross. “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:17), including the environment and climate change. With this in mind then, there is a place for fear, to be sure, but not a fear of environmental disaster; rather a fear of the Lord.

The Christian ethic of environmental stewardship and the popular uptake of environmentalism are two very distinct entities. Although they overlap to some extent, they each represent different worldviews with stark dissimilarities. It’s important to keep these in mind and not get lulled into thinking that our efforts to care for God’s creation are superimposable with the agenda of the environmental movement. We don’t want to unwittingly fall prey to the Devil’s schemes. There is such a powerful inclination to appropriate beliefs from the secularizing culture around us that we need to keep shaping and testing our worldview against Scripture. We need to heed the warning of Apostle Paul, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ” (Col 2:8).

Essentially, other than Jesus our leaders have been fallible. It would be a mistake therefore to equate Christian leadership with never making an error of judgment. I have always been disturbed by the stark contrast between Peter’s profession of faith in the gospel of Mark and his rebuke of Jesus’ path to the cross. Within four verses he goes from highly exalted in the Kingdom to denouncing Jesus in rejection of his faith. Yet when Jesus predicts his betrayal and he takes centre stage at the descent of the Holy Spirit in Acts there is an unmistakable charism of leadership in the way the Holy Spirit speaks through him. How then can we hold all three of these concepts together in one thought? Perhaps it is fair to say the following: Christian leaders have the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and a special charism for leadership but at the same time they are capable of ignoring the grace and acting according to their own unbridled selfish interests at least some of the time.

None of this reflects unfavourably on the inerrancy of scripture and the capacity of the Holy Spirit to guide them. The Holy Spirit however, is a key to the virtue of Christian leadership. What is being referred to here are the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:4-8 which says “everyone who believed was added to the Lord and they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

While this is an important passage that highlights the unity and obedience to the apostles’ teaching, it also serves as a warning that we need to be aware of the temptation to use these gifts for personal gain or to exalt the individual. We need to remember that the church is the body of Christ and the church is the body of Christ and the church is the body of Christ.

What is Christian about Team Leadership?

LARRY WORTHEN

Management literature is filled with references to the virtues of team leadership. Leaders who use a team approach keep their employees engaged, invite them into the decision making and help them develop to become leaders in their own right. The alternative is portrayed as a leader who uses a “command and control” management style, which is viewed as “intuitive” and based on need, makes unilateral decisions without consultation and wants to keep their employees weak and dependent so they will never leave. The management literature would have you believe that this approach is “good” while the latter would be considered “bad”.

Is this value judgement accurate? Does team leadership have some precedent in Christianity? Is the team leadership concept merely another passing trend that has infiltrated into thinking on the coasts of modernism’s nanny 

than parrot the popularized doomsday rhetoric, albeit couched in scriptural jargon. Many environmentalists go even further by claiming that our time has run out, and predict a “climate genocide” regardless of how immediate or radical the attempts taken to alter our present course. The preservation of the natural, environmentalist, and guardian of the universe, environmentalism is left in a bête noir state of fear, holding onto an impervious secular view of our final destiny. As William Ralph Inge wisely observed, “We can’t tell the future; we can’t even command an end, we have no need an exorcist, and has produced one.”

Holding to a Biblical worldview, we can certainly agree that the planet has an end date. The difference, of course, is that Scripture details that this end will occur in accordance with God’s providential plan, independent of man’s shuffling about. As outlined by Apostle Peter, “the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of the ungodly [...] the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be left bare” (2 Peter 3:7-10). Our citizenship, then, isn’t in a global social state, but in a heavenly one (Hebrews 12:22). It isn’t dependent upon carbon reduction, but has been secured for us by Christ’s atonement on the cross. “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:17), including the environment and climate change. With this in mind then, there is a place for fear, to be sure, but not a fear of environmental disaster; rather a fear of the Lord.

The Christian ethic of environmental stewardship and the popular uptake of environmentalism are two very distinct entities. Although they overlap to some extent, they each represent different worldviews with stark dissimilarities. It’s important to keep these in mind and not get lulled into thinking that our efforts to care for God’s creation are superimposable with the agenda of the environmental movement. We don’t want to unwittingly fall prey to the Devil’s schemes. There is such a powerful inclination to appropriate beliefs from the secularizing culture around us that we need to keep shaping and testing our worldview against Scripture. We need to heed the warning of Apostle Paul, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ” (Col 2:8).

Essentially, other than Jesus our leaders have been fallible. It would be a mistake therefore to equate Christian leadership with never making an error of judgment. I have always been disturbed by the stark contrast between Peter’s profession of faith in the gospel of Mark and his rebuke of Jesus’ path to the cross. Within four verses he goes from highly exalted in the Kingdom to denouncing Jesus in rejection of his faith. Yet when Jesus predicts his betrayal and he takes centre stage at the descent of the Holy Spirit in Acts there is an unmistakable charism of leadership in the way the Holy Spirit speaks through him. How then can we hold all three of these concepts together in one thought? Perhaps it is fair to say the following: Christian leaders have the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and a special charism for leadership but at the same time they are capable of ignoring the grace and acting according to their own unbridled selfish interests at least some of the time.

None of this reflects unfavourably on the inerrancy of scripture and the capacity of the Holy Spirit to guide them. The Holy Spirit however, is a key to the virtue of Christian leadership. What is being referred to here are the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:4-8 which says “everyone who believed was added to the Lord and they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

While this is an important passage that highlights the unity and obedience to the apostles’ teaching, it also serves as a warning that we need to be aware of the temptation to use these gifts for personal gain or to exalt the individual. We need to remember that the church is the body of Christ and the church is the body of Christ and the church is the body of Christ.

What is Christian about Team Leadership?

LARRY WORTHEN

Management literature is filled with references to the virtues of team leadership. Leaders who use a team approach keep their employees engaged, invite them into the decision making and help them develop to become leaders in their own right. The alternative is portrayed as a leader who uses a “command and control” management style, which is viewed as “intuitive” and based on need, makes unilateral decisions without consultation and wants to keep their employees weak and dependent so they will never leave. The management literature would have you believe that this approach is “good” while the latter would be considered “bad”.

Is this value judgement accurate? Does team leadership have some precedent in Christianity? Is the team leadership concept merely another passing trend that has infiltrated into thinking on the coasts of modernism’s nanny
The Last Word

LARRY WORTHEN
Executive Director, CMDA Canada
lworthen@cmdacanada.org

It takes a massive disruption in our ordinary lives to begin to realize the extent of our society’s addiction to the illusion of control. COVID-19 represents such a disruptive force. If I may say, even Christian doctors and dentists (and Executive Directors) are not immune from slipping into a mindset that we are in control of our lives. Your professions are filled with people who are the best and the brightest, who have the intelligence, the social skills and the public respect to be able to influence people and systems to move in a particular direction. This is the exercise of personal power to bring about a good patient outcome. We who hold this kind of power often don’t realize we have it until we face a challenge that we cannot overcome, and we naturally experience a loss of our illusion of control.

My family has had a small taste of this experience over the last week. My wife and I have been quarantined in our home since we returned from holidays. Fortunately, we have been able to work from home. My son who is a medical resident is worried about possibly transmitting the virus to his wife and small children. We are trying to arrange for my pregnant daughter, her husband and three boys to come back to Canada from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We are relying on my son, grocery store on line orders and his friends to get food. I noted the irony of how things had changed when my favourite yogurt was left off our internet food order and I just accepted it and was grateful that we had any food at all.

Not getting yogurt is a minor inconvenience. I’m sure your patients have experienced staggering physical, financial and emotional losses due to COVID-19. Many of you have already lived through serious risks to your health, wellbeing and economic stability because of the virus and its’ treatment. Imagine the challenges of working in the Italian health care system right now, being forced to decide who gets a ventilator and its’ treatment. As true followers of Christ, this is a place we should be familiar with. The senseless place, the tragic place, the irrational place, the broken-hearted place, the place of loss, the painful place and the sorrowful place are all places Jesus touched with his own heart. He encountered all of them, even death, at Golgotha, the “place of the skull”. As they live their lives, people experience these places. When we share His love with others, they are touched by Jesus through us.

As true followers of Christ, this is a place we should be familiar with. The COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to realize how much we need the Lord both personally and as a society. In the midst of the suffering we experience we can call out to the Lord and the Christian community for help. In this way we bring into focus the truth of who we really are before God, as a creature and not the creator. Presumably in heaven we will have no route map, no stretch limousine, no promise of home ownership. We travel on treacherous and uncertain pathways. Yet we know that whatever is no route map, no stretch limousine, no promise of home ownership. We travel on treacherous and uncertain pathways. Yet we know that whatever we encounter on the road, Jesus has already been before us to prepare the way.

The COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to realize how much we need the Lord both personally and as a society. In the midst of the suffering we experience we can call out to the Lord and the Christian community for help. In this way we bring into focus the truth of who we really are before God, as a creature and not the creator. Presumably in heaven we will have no doubt about it being God’s world. It is not too early for us to live like that now.

May you have a blessed Easter despite the challenges of COVID-19. We pray that you and your family will remain safe and healthy.

CMDA Canada’s Board of Directors has called for a year of discernment – of prayer and listening to the Lord to ask him to reveal to us his plan for our organization. The first stage of this strategic process is to take a survey of our membership to understand where you feel the Lord is moving us. Please take our online member survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPFOCUS or by scanning the QR code below with an app that reads QR codes.

The COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to realize how much we need the Lord both personally and as a society. In the midst of the suffering we experience we can call out to the Lord and the Christian community for help. In this way we bring into focus the truth of who we really are before God, as a creature and not the creator. Presumably in heaven we will have no doubt about it being God’s world. It is not too early for us to live like that now.

May you have a blessed Easter despite the challenges of COVID-19. We pray that you and your family will remain safe and healthy.

The COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to realize how much we need the Lord both personally and as a society. In the midst of the suffering we experience we can call out to the Lord and the Christian community for help. In this way we bring into focus the truth of who we really are before God, as a creature and not the creator. Presumably in heaven we will have no doubt about it being God’s world. It is not too early for us to live like that now.

May you have a blessed Easter despite the challenges of COVID-19. We pray that you and your family will remain safe and healthy.

The COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to realize how much we need the Lord both personally and as a society. In the midst of the suffering we experience we can call out to the Lord and the Christian community for help. In this way we bring into focus the truth of who we really are before God, as a creature and not the creator. Presumably in heaven we will have no doubt about it being God’s world. It is not too early for us to live like that now.

May you have a blessed Easter despite the challenges of COVID-19. We pray that you and your family will remain safe and healthy.

The COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to realize how much we need the Lord both personally and as a society. In the midst of the suffering we experience we can call out to the Lord and the Christian community for help. In this way we bring into focus the truth of who we really are before God, as a creature and not the creator. Presumably in heaven we will have no doubt about it being God’s world. It is not too early for us to live like that now.

May you have a blessed Easter despite the challenges of COVID-19. We pray that you and your family will remain safe and healthy.

The COVID-19 crisis provides an opportunity to realize how much we need the Lord both personally and as a society. In the midst of the suffering we experience we can call out to the Lord and the Christian community for help. In this way we bring into focus the truth of who we really are before God, as a creature and not the creator. Presumably in heaven we will have no doubt about it being God’s world. It is not too early for us to live like that now.

May you have a blessed Easter despite the challenges of COVID-19. We pray that you and your family will remain safe and healthy.
SELECTED SESSIONS TO BE HELD ONLINE
CMDA CANADA AGM TO BE HELD MAY 30, 2020